



For Immediate Release

Monday, May 16, 2010

Media Contact

Julia Hall

(o) 801-538-6191

News Release

Illness Outbreaks in Utah Linked to Raw Milk

(Salt Lake City) – Utah public health officials are investigating two separate clusters of illness linked to the consumption of raw milk. To date, the first cluster includes nine reported cases of *Campylobacter* infection among residents in Weber, Davis and Cache Counties. The second cluster includes six reported cases of *Salmonella* infection in residents in Utah, Salt Lake and Wasatch Counties. All of the patients involved have reported drinking raw milk (unpasteurized milk) purchased at local vendors licensed in the State of Utah to sell raw milk.

Health officials are working closely with the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) and the dairies where the raw milk was produced. Raw milk from the two dairies has been tested for several bacteria.

The dairy in central Utah that produced the raw milk linked to the *Salmonella* illness cluster provided samples of raw milk produced from April 5 to April 22. These samples came back positive for *Salmonella*. However, raw milk samples taken from milk produced by the dairy collected April 22-30 have come back negative for *Salmonella*.

Coliform testing done on milk at the dairy in northern Utah linked to the *Campylobacter* illness cluster came back high for coliform counts. High coliform counts may be linked to the presence of disease-causing pathogens in the milk.

There are inherent risks associated with the consumption of raw milk because of disease-causing bacteria that are commonly found in milk, such as *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, and *E. coli*. Even with strict state regulations in place regarding the sale of raw milk, there is no guarantee that raw milk is free of disease-causing bacteria.

-MORE-

Page 2 of 2 – Illness Outbreaks in Utah Linked to Raw Milk

Raw milk contaminated with disease-causing bacteria does not smell or look any different from non-contaminated raw milk, and there is no obvious way for the consumer to know if the raw milk is contaminated.

Common symptoms of infection with *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* include: diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, headache, nausea and vomiting. Illness can last for up to a week or more and can be serious, especially for young children, pregnant women, the elderly and those who have weakened or compromised immune systems. In some severe cases, illness can lead to more serious complications, including Guillain-Barré Syndrome.

If you have consumed raw milk in recent days and are experiencing any of these symptoms, contact your health care provider.

If you choose to purchase and/or consume raw milk (or raw milk products) take these steps to help prevent the raw milk or raw milk product from causing illness:

- Purchase raw milk only from those stores or dairies permitted by law to sell it. However, a government permit still does not guarantee that the raw milk (or raw milk product) will be bacteria-free.
- Keep raw milk and raw milk products refrigerated at or below 40°F. Do not let raw milk sit out at room temperature.
- Infants, young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with weakened or compromised immune systems are at higher risk for serious illness from *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, and *E. coli* and should avoid consuming raw milk or raw milk products.

#

The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.